



December 2007 Newsletter



HAVE A WONDERFUL HOLIDAY FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT THE IOWA AFTERSCHOOL ALLIANCE!

We hope your holidays are filled with good food, friends, and family.

In celebration of the holiday season, the IAA offices will be closed from December 24 through January 1. Our offices will open again January 2.

ALL-POLICY ISSUE

In the lead-up to the Iowa Caucuses and commencement of the 2008 Iowa legislative session, the Iowa Afterschool Alliance is dedicating its December newsletter to all things afterschool policy.

The Iowa Afterschool Alliance is looking forward to another great year for afterschool in Iowa. It is our hope that this newsletter will provide all members with the information and tools needed to better advocate for afterschool as a policy priority in our state and across the nation.

Mark Your Calendars: Iowa Afterschool Alliance Legislative Breakfast – March 13, 2008, 7:30 to 9:00 a.m. in the Legislative Dining Room at the Iowa State Capitol

The Iowa Afterschool Alliance has reserved the morning of Thursday, March 13, 2008 to speak with Iowa legislators about afterschool policy in our state. The IAA welcomes all supporters to attend. Later in this issue you will find specific ways to communicate with legislators. The IAA Legislative Breakfast is the perfect opportunity to tell your legislator what's on your mind concerning afterschool and our youth!

IOWA CAUCUSES - JANUARY 3, 2008

Whether registered as Democrat or Republican, you all have the great opportunity to take advantage of Iowa's "first in the nation" status and caucus for afterschool on January 3, 2008. As the first caucus or primary in the United States, Iowa is extremely influential in deciding both parties' candidate for President in 2008. Let's make sure that the next President of the United States understands the important role afterschool programming plays in the healthy development of our nation's children.

The Iowa Afterschool Alliance (IAA) Newsletter is a monthly venue of information and updates on afterschool programs and policies. For more information, please contact Brooke Findley at bfindley@sppg.com or 515-243-2000.

For caucus locations follow these links:

[Democrat](#)

[Republican](#)

EVERY CHILD MATTERS: RAISING THE VISIBILITY OF CHILDREN'S ISSUES AND MAKING INVESTMENTS IN CHILDREN A POLITICAL PRIORITY

Every Child Matters is a non-profit organization whose mission is to make children's needs a national priority and to promote adoption of smart policies for children and families including after-school programs. [Every Child Matters](#) is an important partner of the Afterschool Alliance and Iowa Afterschool Alliance.

To see where candidates stand on afterschool programs go to the Every Child Matters website. Also available on the website is a "Caucus for Kids" kit, as well as information on caucus participation.

IOWA AFTERSCHOOL ALLIANCE 2008 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The IAA has finalized its policy priorities for the 2008 session of the Iowa Legislature. Thanks to an Advocacy Grant through United Way of Central Iowa, the IAA will have the capacity to maintain an on-going advocacy presence at the Capitol again this year. The IAA 2008 policy recommendations are as follows:

Expand state funding to \$6 million and provide a sustainable and flexible resource for afterschool programming

Designate 25% of funds to support development of afterschool programs for middle and high school youth to increase high school graduation rates and youth preparedness for college and the workforce

Create a Transportation Assistance Fund

Repeal SILO and Create Statewide Penny

The full IAA 2008 Legislative Agenda will be available soon on the [Iowa Afterschool Alliance website](#).

For further information on the IAA policy priorities, or

IAA advocacy presence at the Iowa Legislature, please contact Erin Drinnin at 515-243-2000 or edrinnin@sppg.com.

GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY IN 10 MINUTES

As supporters and providers of afterschool in Iowa you have the opportunity to advocate for afterschool. Grassroots advocacy is an integral component to the policy process and the IAA can be a resource for you in your advocacy efforts. Policymakers want to hear from real people with real concerns but don't necessarily have the time to come looking for you, so what are you waiting for?

Stuff That's Easy to Do

- Call your legislators and tell them you would like them to support afterschool programming in Iowa (5 min.)

Don't worry. You'll probably just be talking to a staff member who will write down what you say and pass it on to the legislator. The staff member won't be quizzing you on anything—just passing on your comments and asking for your contact information. Be sure to say that you are a constituent. This is especially helpful if there is a specific piece of legislation that you are asking them to support or oppose.

- Write thank you letters to your legislators (10 min.)

Advocacy is about relationships. When legislators take a position that supports afterschool, take a few minutes and express your personal thanks to them in a phone call, letter or email. Let other advocates know and encourage them to write their own letters.

- Check out what's going on with national advocates for afterschool policy (10 min.)

The more you know about afterschool advocacy efforts in the state and across the nation, the more comfortable you will feel taking further action.

Stuff That Takes a Little More Time and Effort

- Write a letter or an email to legislators asking them to support afterschool in Iowa (15-30 min.)

Be direct, persuasive and brief. Don't expect them to guess why you are writing or to read your entire life story. Whether you are a consumer or a provider, the letter should follow a basic template:

- o 1st paragraph states the reason for the letter and who you are
- o 2nd paragraph gives reasons for your position and a specific illustration of those reasons
- o 3rd paragraph summarizes your position and requests a specific action from them

Emails can follow the same template. Be sure to include your full contact information.

- Start a letter writing or phone calling campaign (30 to 90 min.)

The more letters and phone calls a member of Congress or the State Legislature gets on an issue, the more they pay attention. Using the guidelines provided above, ask others you know who are involved in afterschool issues to join you in writing letters and making phone calls. Email is also a terrific and convenient way to get out information and ask people to join you. Be sure people add their own personal approach to their phone calls and letters—form letters and highly scripted phone calls are not effective advocacy tools.

- Attend town hall meetings in your area (60-90 min.)

Legislators commonly hold regular meetings in their districts for the purpose of talking with their constituents. These meeting locations and times are generally advertised in newspapers beforehand and can also be distributed via email networks. Attend a "town meeting" and use talking points to speak with your legislator about issues that are important to you. It can be very effective to ask a question that calls for action, such as "What will you do this year to ensure that children in Iowa have access to quality afterschool programming?"

Stuff That Takes a Good Deal of Time and Effort

- Meeting with legislators at the Capitol (15-30 min.

plus planning time)

Meeting directly with legislators is said to be the most effective form of advocacy. Iowa legislators are generally easily accessible and welcome constituent visits. Their schedules can change and you must be willing to be flexible and recognize that their schedules are sometimes not under their control.

As with other advocacy efforts, it is important to provide the legislators with accurate information, as well as a personal perspective. Groups of advocates, such as children and their afterschool providers, have been highly effective. Be sure to let the legislator and his/her staff know what you'd like them to do and to leave them with more information to look at when you are gone. Follow up any meeting with a personal thank-you note.

To find information on your state legislators, visit the [Iowa General Assembly website](#).

For additional afterschool advocacy tools, visit the [Iowa Afterschool Alliance website](#).

If you have any questions, or for any other additional information on how you can advocate for afterschool in Iowa, please contact Erin Drinnin at 515-243-2000 or edrinnin@sppg.com.

Non-profit Organizations and Lobbying

The Iowa Afterschool Alliance network includes representatives of a diverse array of organizations. It is important for each organization to fully understand its capacity to advocate issues related to specific legislation. The Alliance for Justice is a great resource for non-profits seeking information related to 501(c)(3) organizations and lobbying. Recently published is "Worry-free Lobbying for Nonprofits." This publication recognizes the legitimacy of lobbying by non-profits and explains the most effective and generous method of filing lobbying by your organization. The full text can be accessed on the Alliance for Justice website.

You are receiving this newsletter because you are a member of the Iowa Afterschool Alliance supporter database. If you would like to stop receiving this newsletter, please contact Nicole Hill at 515-243-2000 or nhill@sppg.com.